

REMARKS

The Office action mailed August 29, 2006, allowed claims 22, 24, 25, and 27-33 and rejected claims 53-58. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections in light of the remarks presented in this reply.

I. Independent claim 53

Claim 53 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,618,086 ("Kawahara") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,498,622 ("Nakashiba"). Additionally, claim 53 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawahara in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,965,875 ("Merrill"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 53 defines a method that comprises, inter alia, a "first well region being separated from the photosensor." The prior art cited in the action does not teach or suggest this limitation.

The Office action asserts that region 103 of figures 1-3 corresponds to "the first well region being separated from the photosensor" (see pages 2-3 of the Office action). The applicants respectfully traverse this assertion. Region 103 is not "separated from the photosensor." Instead, region 103 is part of the photosensor. As figure 1A and 2A show, region 103 is part of part 110. At lines 64-66 of column 2, Kawahara explains that part 110 is a "light-receiving element region formed with the phototransistor and the light-receiving MOS diode." Thus, region 103 is included in the "light-receiving element" or photosensor. As region 103 is part of the photosensor, it is not "separated from the photosensor."

No other portion of Kawahara teaches or suggests the above-cited limitation of claim 53. Regarding Nakashiba and Merrill, nothing has been cited or found in these patents that pertain to the above-cited limitation of claim 53. As such, no combination of Kawahara, Nakashiba, or Merrill teach or suggest all the limitations of claim 53.

II. Dependent claims

Dependent claims 54 and 58 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawahara in view of Nakashiba. Additionally, dependent claims 54, 55, and 57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawahara in view of Merrill. These rejections are respectfully traversed. Each of these claims is allowable at least because each of these claims depends from an allowable base claim.

III. Conclusion

In view of the amendments and remarks presented in this reply, the applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance. If there are any formal matters remaining after this reply, the applicants respectfully request the examiner to telephone the undersigned. If there are any additional fees associated with the filing of this reply, including fees required under 35 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, please charge them to deposit account no. 04-1073.

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Respectfully submitted,

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